

## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY A FORMER PRESIDENT

The following sketch by former E.B.B.A. President Horace Groskin, of Ardmore, Pennsylvania, was originally sent to John V. Dennis, of Leesburg, Virginia, in reply to his request for data in connection with his book on attracting birds which is now in preparation. Mr. Dennis thought that the sketch was of sufficient interest for use in EBBA NEWS, so he sent it on to the Editor. In order to bring it a little more up to date than it was originally, Mr. Groskin was asked to revise it as of May of this year, and he also consented to its use in EBBA NEWS. The sketch follows.

"From May 1937 to May 1953, I have banded a total of 17, 448 birds representing 60 different species. Of these, 814 individuals returned to the banding station. Several hundred of my birds were retrapped by other banders or found dead.

"The species I have banded in largest numbers was the Purple Finch -- 7,971 individuals. Returns numbered 158 (2.1%). Many of these returned a number of times in following years, up to eight and one half years later. Of my Purple Finches, 138 were retrapped by other banders or were found dead at distances of from 10 to 1,184 air line miles from the banding station. The Purple Finch does not nest in this area. They are present only during the months between November and May.

"I have banded 2,171 Goldfinches, 2,471 Juncos, over 1,500 White-throated Sparrows, over 500 Song Sparrows, 226 Pine Siskins, and 419 Cardinals. For bait I use sunflower seed, and for Song Sparrows, Juncos, White-throated Sparrows, and others, I use a mixture containing hemp and millet. I keep suet all the year around for woodpeckers and, in summer, for Catbirds.

"One cannot expect to get any large number of birds to band unless a large number are present the year around, and the best way to obtain large numbers is to be liberal with food. The food should be distributed liberally upon feeders where there are no traps. When the birds are accustomed to coming for food, then the traps can be placed nearby.

"The most interesting birds I have banded recently were the Philadelphia Vireo, Common Redpoll, Summer Tanager, and White-winged Crossbill."

Note: The story is going the rounds that Mr. Groskin really proved his point when he announced the capture of the Summer Tanager at a meeting of the Delaware Valley Ornithological Club, which organization is noted for the good-natured going over that members got when they announce records of rare birds such as the Summer Tanager.

As I heard it, Mr. G. stood up and announced the occurrence of a Summer Tanager on a certain day in April (1952). "Hah, hah!", said a member; "Tell us another", said a notorious razzor. "And what's more, I banded it", said Mr. G. "Probably was a Cardinal", said a doubting Thomas. "And furthermore, here it is in this box", triumphantly concluded our former president!

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## CONCERNING BAND SIZES

In a previous issue of EBBA NEWS, a letter was published from the Reverend Charles Stochr, of Annapolis, Maryland, concerning the discrepancy between suggested band sizes and those which many banders find to be better fits. In response to a plea for such data as members may have accumulated in this connection, the following from Dr. Charles H. Blake, Lincoln, Mass., is the only communication received. If any other members have any information at all concerning better band fits, please send it in immediately. This topic is of even greater importance now than it was several months ago, since, as readers know, the banding office, in connection with issuing a manual in loose-leaf form, plans to revise its list of recommended sizes, so why not send Seth Low a copy of what you send to EBBA NEWS so that he may have it to use when they work on their revision of the present list?

Dr. Blake write as follows: "Pending the completion of a study in progress, I submit the following suggested changes in the list of band sizes: